Government has advised OMCs to liquidate the backlog in the States by operating the bottling plants on holidays and during extended hours. Increased bottling is also being done during the working days for early clearance of backlog.

(c) The enrolment of new LPG customers and release of new LPG connections is a continuous process. Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have reported that at present, new LPG connections are available across the counter for genuine domestic customers on verification of documents as per laid down procedure.

OMCs have reported that as on 1.2.2008 they are having 108.4 lakh domestic LPG connections in the State of Andhra Pradesh. OMCs have released 4.6 lakh new LPG connections in the State of Andhra Pradesh during the period from April, 2007-January, 2008 as against 3.2 lakh connections during the corresponding period of last year.

Fiberglass LPG cylinders

570. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that his Ministry is seriously considering to introduce fiberglass LPG cylinders to prevent malpractice of LPG distribution;

(b) if so, whether the fiberglass LPG cylinders are also as safe as the existing LPG cylinders;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether a Committee has been constituted by the Department of Consumer Affairs to identify the problems being faced by LPG consumers, particularly with regard to malpractices in distribution; and

(e) if so, the recommendations made by the Committee?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) to (c) Government has conveyed "in principle" approval to the Public Sector Oil Markeing Companies (OMCs) for expanding the product line by way of introduction of composite cylinders for marketing domestic LPG, subject to there being no subsidy element in the LPG to be marketed through these composite cylinders. To start with, Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOC) along with Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) intend to import some cylinders and do test marketing in selected cities.

OMCs are procuring LPG cylinders from cylinder manufacturers who have valid manufacturing licences from the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) and the Chief Controller of Explosives (CCoE). LPG cylinders procured by OMCs meet the required quality standards.

OMCs have reported that necessary approval of CCoE has been obtained for use of composite cylinders for LPG.

(d) and (e) No, Sir. No Committee has been constituted by the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) to identify the problems being faced by LPG consumers.

Southern Gas Grid Project

571. PROF. P.J. KURIEN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state: